



February 7, 2023

Dear State of Connecticut Public Safety and Security Committee,

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Hartford Athletic – Connecticut’s professional soccer team – in support of Proposed Bill No. 5496 to allow for the sale, purchase, and use of photographic and videographic special effect smoke devices in Connecticut.

Special effect smoke is an essential element of game entertainment and stadium atmosphere in soccer culture, and it is used safely throughout the U.S. and the world. In the USL Championship – the league Hartford Athletic competes in -- there are substantial protocols in place to ensure that smoke devices are used safely on game day, and twenty-six (26) USL teams allowed for smoke devices to be used by designated fan representatives in their stadium as of the start of the 2022 season. I would be happy to provide the protocols in more detail, but to summarize these protocols include: only Club-approved individuals are permitted to utilize approved smoke devices at games, smoke may not be brought into the stadium but must be provided by Club operations staff to the approved individual, and smoke is only permitted to be used at certain locations and times (for example after a goal is scored).

The allowance of special effects smoke devices will provide for heightened game day entertainment thus allowing for Hartford Athletic to increase revenue through ticket sales which in turn allow our business to be sustainable, create more jobs, and make even more of an impact on the community that we have dedicated ourselves to since launching the Club and revitalizing historic Dillon Stadium (now Trinity Health Stadium).

Thank you for considering this testimony, and we would be happy to answer any questions or discuss further.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Calafiore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" and last name "Calafiore" clearly distinguishable.

Joseph Calafiore  
Hartford Athletic